

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 06787 01 OF 02 101008Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /037 W

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P R 100925Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6056

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 6787

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MY

SUBJECT: MALAYSIAN ELECTIONS: NATIONAL FRONT WINS BIG

REF: A) KUALA LUMPUR 6718 DTG 070929Z JUL 78, B) KUALA  
LUMPUR 6293 DTG 260404Z JUN 78, C) KUALA LUMPUR  
5599 DTG 130200Z JUN 78

1. SUMMARY. THE RULING NATIONAL FRONT (NF) COALITION  
WON AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY IN THE JULY 8 FENERAL  
ELECTIONS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, TAKING 94 OF  
114 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS AND WINNING CONTROL OF ALL  
TEN STATE ASSEMBLIES CONTESTED. ALL MAJOR NF  
LEADERS WERE RETURNED TO PARLIAMENT, BUT THE NEW  
CABINET WILL NOT BE NAMED UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION  
RESULTS FROM SABAH AND SARAWAK ARE KNOWN ON JULY 22.

NF HAS ALREADY WON 4 SEATS UNOPPOSED OF THE 40  
AT STAKE IN SABAH AND SARAWAK AND IT IS EXPECTED  
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TO WIN BIG IN BOTH. THE ISLAMIC PARTY (PAS) WAS  
BADLY BEATEN; PAS PRESIDENT ASRI MUDA WAS DEFEATED  
FOR PARLIAMENT AND THE PARTY WON ONLY FIVE FEDERAL  
AND NINE STATE SEATS. THE LEFT-WING, CHINESE-BASED  
DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY (DAP) ALMOST DOUBLED ITS  
REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT (TO 15), BUT IT  
FAILED TO WIN THE PERAK STATE ASSEMBLY AS IT

HOPED. PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN HAS SECURED A STRONG ELECTORAL MANDATE, AND WITH THE CRIPPLING OF PAS IS IN A POSITION TO PURSUE VIGOROUSLY MODERATE PROGRAM WHICH AUGURS WELL FOR CONTINUED NATIONAL SECURITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNAL TOLERANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE JULY 8 GENERAL ELECTION IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA (THE POLLING IN SABAH AND SARAWAK IS STAGGERED AND RESULTS WILL NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL JULY 15 IN SABAH AND JULY 22 IN SARAWAK), THE RULING NF COALITION WON 94 OF THE 114 SEATS (82 PERCENT) IN PARLIAMENT AND 55 PERCENT OF TOTAL VOTES CAST. PAS WON ONLY 5 SEATS AND THE DAP WON 15. THERE WERE NO SUCCESSFUL PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES FROM OTHER PARTIES OR FROM AMONG THE INDEPENDENTS. THE NF ALSO WON ALL TEN STATE ASSEMBLIES CONTESTED ON JULY 8, TAKING ALL THE SEATS IN PERLIS, TRENGGANU AND PAHANG. IN PERAK THE NF WON 32 SEATS, THE DAP 9 AND PAS ONE. PAS WON ONLY SEVEN OF 26 SEATS IN KEDAH AND THE NF TOOK THE REST. THE OPPOSITION (MOSTLY DAP) TOOK A HANDFUL OF SEATS IN EACH OF THE OTHER STATES, BUT DID NOT COME CLOSE TO THREATENING NF CONTROL. OVER 75 PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS VOTED.

3. BOTH PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN AND DEPUTY PM  
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MAHATHIR WERE RETURNED TO PARLIAMENT WITH LARGE MAJORITIES. OF THE NF LEADERS MENTIONED PARA 8 REFTTEL A, ONLY DEPUTY MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND FEDERAL TERRITORY S. SUBRAMANIAM WAS DEFEATED (BY THE DAP'S V. DAVID, A TRADE UNION LEADER IN K.L.'S DAMANSARA CONSTITUENCY). ALL OTHER MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS WHO STOOD FOR RE-ELECTION WERE SUCCESSFUL. (WE DO NOT YET, OF COURSE, KNOW THE FATE OF SARAWAK'S TAIB MAHMUD AND SULAIMAN DAUD.) PM HUSSEIN SAID JULY 9 THAT HE WILL ANNOUNCE THE NEW CABINET AFTER THE SARAWAK RETURNS ARE IN JULY 22 AND THAT HE WILL ANNOUNCE THE DATE FOR CONVENING THE NEW PARLIAMENT AT THAT TIME.

4. THE MOST SURPRISING RESULT OF THE ELECTION WAS THE HUMILIATION OF PAS. PARTY PRESIDENT ASRI MUDA LOST HIS BID TO WIN A PARLIAMENTARY SEAT IN KEDAH (HE IS ORIGINALLY FROM KELANTAN WHERE PAS SUFFERED A SIMILAR DEFEAT IN THE SPECIAL STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN MARCH), AND SO HE NOW HOLDS NO ELECTIVE OFFICE. THE PARTY NOW HAS ONLY 4 PARLIAMENTARY

SEATS (VS. 13 BEFORE THE ELECTION), HASS ONLY TWO  
STATE ASSEMBLYMEN IN KELANTAN (WHICH IT HAD CON-  
TROLLED SINCE 1959), FAILED BADLY IN ITS BID TO CAPTURE  
THE KEDAH ASSEMBLY, AND IN FACT HAS FEWER STATE  
ASEMBLYMEN THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY (11) THAN IT HAD  
MP'S IN THE LAST PARLIAMENT. IN THE PARLIAMENTARY  
CONTEST THE PAS PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL VOTE DECLINED  
FROM 23.8 PER CENT IN 1969 WHEN IT LAST RAN IN THE  
OPPOSITION TO 17.1 PERCENT IN 1978 (THE NF OBTAINED  
55.1 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE). THIS PERCENTAGE  
INDICATES THAT THERE IS STILL A CONSTITUENCY FOR AN  
ISLAMIC-BASED MALAY PARTY, EVEN THOUGH THE MALAY  
PARTY IN THE NF, THE SECULAR UNITED MALAYAS NATIONAL  
ORGANIZATION (UMNO) HAS PROVEN ONCE AGAIN THAT IT  
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APPEALS TO THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE MALAYS. IF  
PAS HOPES TO REGAIN ITS FORMER PROMINENCE, IT WILL  
HAVE TO UNDERGO CONSIDERABLE REFORM, ESPECIALLY  
REGARDING ITS NOW-DISCREDITED LEADERSHIP. THERE  
ARE DOUBTS THAT THE NEWLY FORMED KELANTAN-BASED

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P R 100925Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6057

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 6787

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

BERJASA PARTY CAN TAKE OVER AS THE MAJOR ISLAMIC PARTY SINCE ITS CLOSE TIES WITH UMNO IMPEDE ITS APPEAL TO PAXS PARTISIANS? FURTHERMORE IT IS CLEAR THAT THE UMNO WANTS TO BE SOLE MALAY PARTY IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA. THERE IS HOWEVER ALREADY A SPLINTER GROUP IN BERJASA THAT SUCCEDED IN BLOCKING A BERJASA-NF ELECTORAL UNDERSTANDING AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THESE ELEMENTS MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DISARRAY IN PAS AND TRY TO MAKE BERJASA THE SUCCESSOR TO PAS AS AN INDEPENDENT ISLAMIC PARTY.

5. THE DAP, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS EMERGED FROM THE ELECTION AS THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT RIVAL FOR THE NON-MALAY VOTE. THE 15 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS IT CAPTURED THIS TIME TOP EVEN THE 13 IT WON IN 1969 (ALTHOUGH OTHER NON-MALAY OPPOSITION PARTIES ALSO WON SEATS THEN). THE DAP ALSO IMPROVED SLIGHTLY  
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ITS TOTAL NUMBER OF STATE ASSEMBLY SEATS (26 VS. 23 8, 1974.). MOST IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, THE DAP IS NOW THE ONLY VIABLE SOCIALIST PARTY IN THE COUNTRY, SINCE ALL THE OTHERS (PEKEMAS, THE PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST PARTY, THE SOCIALIST DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND OTHERS) WERE COMPLETELY SHUT OUT, WINNING ONLY 2 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL VOTES VS. 20.8 PER CENT FOR THE DAP. THE DAP'S MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT WAS ITS FAILURE TO DO BETTER IN THE PERAK STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTION. THE PARTY DID WELL IN THE PREDOMINANTLY CHINESE AREAS OF THE STATE, BUT ONLY ONE OF ITS 25 MALAY CANDIDATES WAS SUCCESSFUL. EVEN HERE, THOUGH, THE FAILURE OF THE DAP CAN AT LEAST PARTLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE WEAKNESS OF PAS, WHICH HAD BEEN COUNTED ON TO DRAW MALAY VOTES AWAY FROM NF CANDIDATES.

6. COMMENT. THE BIG NF WIN IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA (WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE DUPLICATED IN THE SABAH AND SARAWAK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND THUS GIVE THE COALITION WELL OVER THE 103 SEATS IT NEEDS FOR A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT) HAS GIVEN PM HUSSEIN THE STRONG MANDATE HE HAD HOPED FOR. THIS WILL ALLOW HIM TO ENTER THE UPCOMING UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO AT LEAST TURN BACK AND PROBABLY PREVENT ANY INTRA-PARTY CHALLENGE AND THUS SECURE KEY PARTY POSITIONS FOR HIS ASSOCIATES.

MORE IMPORRANTLY, HUSSEIN IS NOW IN A POSTIION TO  
PURSUE FREELY THOSE POLICIES HE THINKS BEST FOR  
PRESERNING NATIONAL SECURITY, ECONOMIC PROSPERTIY  
AND COMMUNAL TOLERANCE. ESPECIALLY WITH THE DEFEAT  
OF PAS, THE MOST SEVERE PRESSURES TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES  
FAVORABLE ONLY TO THE MALAYS ARE CONSIDERABLY  
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REDUCED. THE GOM WILL NOT ABANDON THE NEW ECONOMIC  
POLICY WITH ITS GOAL OF IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC POSTION  
OF THE MALY COMMUNITY, BUT IT SHOULD NOW BE ABLE  
TO CONTINUE THE FLEXIBILITY IN IMPLEMENTING THE  
NEP WHICH HUSSEIN AND MAHATHIR SHOWED SIGNS OF BEFORE  
THE ELECTIONS. THIS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A PICK-UP  
IN DOMESTIC INVESTOR CONFIDENCE WHICH WILL HELP  
STIMULATE FURTHER ECONOMIC GROWTH AND  
INCREASED INTEREST ON THE PART OF FOREING INVESTORS.  
CONTINUING PROSPERITY AND A CHECK IN THE RISE OF  
NON-MALAY DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOM ARE KEYS TO  
COMMUNAL TOLERANCE AND STABILITY, AND THE 1978  
ELECTIONS HAVE GIVEN PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN THE  
FREEDOM TO PURSUE BOTH.  
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